Lifetime Communities on the Ground
Lessons from around the Twin Cities

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Prepared for Metropolitan Area Agency on Aging by Lydia Morken, MRP

Editing, design and layout by Julie Roles
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Greater Twin Cities United Way collaborates with business, government and nonprofit organizations to build pathways out of poverty, creating opportunities for all humankind. Find out more at www.gtcuw.org. Collectively we are unstoppable.

Metropolitan Area Agency on Aging
2365 McKnight Road North
North Saint Paul, MN 55109
651.641.8612
metroaging.org
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Executive Summary

Our population is aging at an unprecedented rate—in Minnesota, the U.S. and around the world. A new reality is here: the number and proportion of older people in our population are greater than ever before and growing every day.

Communities are on the front lines of this change. Their leadership can facilitate collective ownership and accountability for community-driven responses that help older adults live their best lives.

During the past decade, many communities in the Twin Cities have initiated efforts to become age-friendly or lifetime communities—places where people can thrive as they grow up and grow old. Whether urged by a concerned citizen, local government employee, elected official or community-based organization, many communities are recognizing the urgency around this issue and taking action. Many still are not.

Metropolitan Area Agency on Aging (MAAA) is a regional leader in this arena, providing expertise and resources for community living. Creating lifetime communities is, and has been for over a decade, part of our organizational strategic plan. Through thought leadership, the Lifetime Communities program, and funding of this work, we are helping Twin Cities’ communities become more inclusive and better able to meet the needs of older residents.

This report takes stock of the current landscape of age-friendly efforts around the seven-county Twin Cities metropolitan area and presents themes and lessons drawn from on-the-ground work. Through interviews with leaders of 17 initiatives with varying scopes and structures, we have uncovered some of the critical circumstances that lead to success when creating lifetime communities.

The report highlights common challenges and gaps communities face in this work, such as changing mindsets about aging, getting buy-in from community leaders, the role of funding and the need for structure around an initiative.

Based on findings from the research, we have made recommendations for ways that MAAA and other organizations can help advance this work—such as by providing information, tools, and other assistance; creating opportunities for communities to learn from each other; serving as neutral facilitators to guide cross-sector collaboration; making funding available and more.

Age-friendly work has expanded and evolved in the past decade. This is good news, but it also means that more places need support and resources to continue their progress.

We hope that this report is useful to communities currently engaged in the work as well as to those who are positioning to take action in the future. We thank Greater Twin Cities United Way for the financial support they provided to produce this report.
More Minnesotans will turn 65 this decade than in the past four decades combined. In the coming years, the number and proportion of older adults in our population will reach historic levels. This trend is mirrored across the country and the globe. Preparing for this enormous demographic shift is one of the most pressing issues facing communities.

Planning an age-friendly or lifetime community—terms used interchangeably throughout this report—means working to integrate the needs and preferences of older adults into the various, interlocking aspects of a community.

Metropolitan Area Agency on Aging (MAAA) helps communities across the seven-county metro area prepare for an aging population. The best way to do this—including how to spur more communities to undertake the work—remains a somewhat open question. MAAA prepared this report to illuminate what communities are doing to address the issue and to surface recommendations for furthering the work.

Citizens and volunteers, service providers, planners and others engaged in this work—or attempting to begin it—may find this report a useful resource for learning about various approaches being taken and in trying to understand how and why certain outcomes occur.

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About This Report

The report looks at current efforts to support aging in the Twin Cities. It offers insights into the conditions that lead to progress and the challenges that hinder it. The report concludes with recommendations for actions to help communities succeed.

The report has two primary components:

- An analysis of metro-area efforts to plan for, support and engage the aging population.
- Profiles of 17 initiatives reviewed in this research that together create a representative cross section of current efforts.

See Appendices 1–4 for more information about how this report was created.
Background

Population aging presents exciting opportunities alongside significant challenges.

Communities will have the opportunity to leverage older adults’ skills, experience, time, civic engagement and economic contributions. Challenges such as gaps in transportation choices, insufficient affordable housing options and support services that miss the mark could become crises if not addressed.

Physical, social, and services infrastructure all need attention—and they are all connected. Suburbs, where about 40 percent of Minnesota baby boomers live, face a particularly uphill battle as their residents age and find themselves in single-family homes distant from retail and services, with limited housing options and few means to get from here to there.

Further, boomers want and prioritize different things as they age than did previous generations. Among other things, they largely reject institutional living and have expressed a strong desire to age in the community. The first of 78 million boomers started turning 65 in 2011. This is unchartered territory that we are only beginning to comprehend.

Many places have begun to prepare for and respond to this new reality. Initiatives range from grassroots efforts to extensive, multi-sector strategies that engage many community partners and high-level elected officials at the systems and policy levels (e.g., New York City, Boston and the Atlanta region).

A defining element of age-friendly communities is placing older adults themselves at the heart of the work. As noted by MAAN and others, older adults are the experts on their own lives, and their experiences and engagement—as well as that of their family caregivers—must guide the work. This principle also reflects that each community is unique and that, while some universal age-friendly goals exist, immediate priorities will vary from place to place and will most accurately be determined through direct engagement of community members.

Lifetime communities are committed to inclusion of all ages and abilities. Historically, cities have defaulted to designing for young, able-bodied adults, with older-adult-specific services, housing and transportation added on to compensate for gaps in the basic infrastructure. While some older adult needs require unique responses, there are many opportunities to create a new baseline that is deliberately inclusive of all people.

This work is (or should be) undertaken with the knowledge that “aging” doesn’t refer just to the very old and frail—although they certainly are included. We age continually over the course of our lives, and older age can mean 50 to 70 to 90 and beyond. Many of us will be older adults for quite a long time, moving through various stages at our individual paces. People and organizations engaged in this work must consider how a community plans to serve a newly retired 68-year-old as well as support an 88-year-old widower in senior housing.
General Challenges Inherent to the Work

Meeting the needs of an aging population, done well, means changing systems, mindsets and infrastructure, and therefore takes time. Community leaders who undertake this work frequently encounter some common challenges—all of which can present significant opportunities when overcome.

- **Dismantling ageism and discredited ideas of “old”:** Negative stereotypes of older age abound. Aging is often viewed through a lens of deficit, decline and withdrawal into the fringes of a community. Many cities have taken a fairly narrow view of what it means to support older adults, often through a senior center and senior housing. Whether that was ever enough, it certainly will not be for the boomer generation. Exciting opportunities exist to re-define aging as a chapter of life ripe for discovery, rich experiences and valued contributions to society.

- **Missing the boat on multi-gen:** Communities often prioritize attracting young families, seeing them as the ticket to maintaining or renewing community vibrancy. Yet a multi-generational community that helps residents of every age to thrive is true vibrancy and sustainability. The needs and resources of older adults and younger generations complement each other, and those links should be made and strengthened.

- **More middle age (it’s a good thing):** For many people longer lifespans will provide what’s been called an extended middle age, a period that can be highly productive both professionally and personally. Communities would be remiss to ignore the economic and human capital opportunities associated with this phenomenon.

- **Same communities, different worlds:** Different levels of government and organizations within and outside of the same sector often work independently of each other. Planning activities for housing, transportation and land use (“hard” planning) are not coordinated with things like health care and social services (“soft” planning). These worlds must be integrated, a necessary and often politically challenging process.

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**WHAT IS A LIFETIME COMMUNITY?**

A lifetime community is one that has affordable and appropriate housing; adequate transportation and mobility options; accessible health and human services; and workforce, volunteer and community engagement opportunities that enable citizens to thrive across their lifespan.

These amenities help to maximize individual independence and quality of life while enhancing the economic, civic and social vitality of the community.

—National Association of Area Agencies on Aging
Frameworks for Addressing Needs of an Aging Population

Some of the work being done in the Twin Cities builds off of existing frameworks for helping communities address the needs of an aging population. The following short descriptions of key local, national and global frameworks/programs provide an overview of the larger context in which this work exists.

**Livable Communities for All Ages**
National Association of Area Agencies on Aging founded its Livable Communities for All Ages initiative more than a decade ago. This initiative defines livable communities in short as “good places to grow up and grow older.” They are safe and walkable places with affordable housing and transportation choices where people of all ages and abilities can participate fully in community life.

In the Twin Cities, MAAA has provided leadership, funding, technical assistance and other resources to help the region prepare for this demographic shift. In 2013 and 2014, MAAA—with funding from the Greater Twin Cities United Way—awarded small grants for projects in 23 metro communities and launched an initiative called Lifetime Communities. As part of the initiative, we brought leaders together in the Lifetime Communities Learning and Action Collaborative.

**Dementia Friendly Communities**
Dementia friendly communities address concerns specific to people living with dementia and their families and caregivers. As lifespans extend we will experience a surge of people living with dementia, and communities have a significant role to play in supporting these residents and their families.

The ACT on Alzheimer’s initiative—which originated in Minnesota and now is being modeled across the country as Dementia Friendly America—helps communities become informed, safe and respectful places that foster quality of life for people with dementia and their caregivers.

Although age-friendly frameworks on their own have not traditionally included dementia friendly strategies, MAAA understands dementia friendly communities as a subset or domain of age-friendly work, and greater attention is being paid to integrating the two. Both are rooted in community engagement and education, and the goals and processes overlap and complement.

**Minnesota’s Transform 2010**
In 2006 Minnesota launched Transform 2010, an initiative to help communities understand the impacts of aging and the changes to infrastructure, policies and services that would help older adults thrive. Led by the Department of Human Services, Transform 2010, since updated as Aging 2030, involved extensive community engagement and demographic and aging-related data analysis. It culminated in a report called “A Blueprint for 2020: Preparing Minnesota for the Age Wave” that laid out, among many other things, fundamental tenets for a Communities for a Lifetime strategy. (See Appendix 5 for more information.)

**World Health Organization’s Age-Friendly Communities**
The farthest-reaching program in this realm is the World Health Organization’s (WHO) Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities. Established in 2006 the network now comprises 380 cities worldwide, and includes 144 in the United States. In the U.S., where AARP is its institutional affiliate, the network is growing rapidly; nearly 50 cities joined in 2016 alone. The framework is organized around eight domains of
community life likely to influence an older adult’s well-being and outlines a four-phase process to be carried out over five years. (See Appendix 5 for more information.)

Livability Movement
Livability is broader than age-friendliness but includes older adults in its vision and incorporates many elements that benefit older people. Livability typically considers safety, walkability, recreation, transportation and housing choices, and in some cases social equity, jobs, services and basic needs.

There is wide recognition of this concept, even where it is not being applied, and many communities consider it desirable, as livable communities tend to make a region more economically competitive and are the types of places that both millennials and boomers say they want to live. Both groups express preferences for walkable communities and transportation options that don’t require car dependence, housing where you can stay as you age, high-speed internet access, and investing in local communities and economies (rather than working to attract major employers, for example).

Healthy Communities Movement
Another separate but related movement is framed around health. There is a growing understanding that individual and community health is linked less to the health care system than it is to social determinants—factors like a person’s socio-economic status, physical environment, education, employment and social support network. Given that the U.S. pays more for health care but has worse health outcomes than many other developed countries, major initiatives like the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s Culture of Health program are calling attention to community health and providing resources to help improve it. These efforts can be grassroots-driven or led by local governments or healthcare institutions.

ACT ON ALZHEIMER’S

Twenty-two Twin Cities metro communities (and 27 more in greater Minnesota) have formed ACT on Alzheimer’s Action Communities and are working to become dementia friendly through the four phases of the ACT model: Convene, Engage, Analyze, Act.

MAAA has played various roles in creating dementia friendly communities through ACT on Alzheimer’s, including providing coaching and technical assistance for communities engaged in this work.

See Appendix 5 for more information, and learn more at actonalz.org.
Findings & Analysis

The Current Landscape

Lifetime-community-type work in the Twin Cities metro includes efforts of different scopes, structures, and, to some degree, objectives. The analysis in this report covers many of the initiatives that participated in the MAAA Lifetime Communities Learning and Action Collaborative as well as others, and, to a limited extent, the 22 ACT on Alzheimer’s initiatives in the Twin Cities. The initiatives represent a cross section of the current landscape but are not exhaustive. The report also includes profiles of 17 initiatives, including those in Minneapolis and Saint Paul and 14 suburban communities. Since the ACT communities are profiled on the ACT on Alzheimer’s website, they are not profiled here.

Communities in the metro area are doing substantial work in this arena, and the number of efforts continues to grow. Most focus specifically on older adults, but some bundle age-friendliness into larger initiatives around community health, intensive community engagement or broader livability. Most are city- or county-wide initiatives; two are transportation programs designed for...
older people. For those efforts focused on older adults, transportation commonly is the highest priority issue, with housing and social isolation close behind.

Most lifetime community efforts in the metro area are relatively young—the three longest standing are around 10 years old. As a result, we have limited information about how these initiatives will unfold and be sustained over time. Nor can we assess the impacts of policy changes that have longer-term horizons, such as integrating aging into comprehensive plans (long-range plans that cities and counties create to address housing, transportation and other core areas).

General findings from our research include:

- Suburban initiatives exist primarily in more affluent places—cities such as Maple Grove, Eagan, Woodbury and Apple Valley, and in Carver and Dakota Counties, with an exception being West St. Paul.
- Initiatives are not necessarily located in the communities with the oldest populations.
- Some places, such as Carver County, are motivated by trying to prevent an exodus of aging boomers who might leave to seek more housing options and amenities somewhere else.

### PROJECT INITIATION

One way of understanding the initiatives is by considering the impetus for launching. Our research has found three primary pathways for lifetime community efforts to get started.

#### Citizen-Initiated

An individual citizen champions the effort, engages the city and recruits others from the broader community.

**Examples:** Maple Grove, Saint Paul, St. Louis Park

#### Organization-Led

An organization with a particular practice or expertise leads a focused effort.

**Examples:** West St. Paul LOOP circulator bus led by DARTS, a community-based nonprofit; Healthy Aging Northeast (Minneapolis); healthcare organization leading a community health initiative

#### City- or County-Led

City or county employees use their positions to develop plans, set policies, engage residents, influence actions.

**Examples:** Chanhassen, Apple Valley, Dakota and Carver Counties
Effective suburban county–city coordination exists in some communities, such as Carver County’s Office of Aging and Dakota County’s Communities for a Lifetime program providing cities with technical assistance and other support. This is less so in the core cities of Minneapolis (Hennepin County) and Saint Paul (Ramsey County), although Saint Paul-Ramsey County Public Health created a healthy aging planner position in 2015.

Smaller and more rural-feeling communities can be advantaged by their size: decision makers are accessible, bureaucracy is reduced and leaders can respond nimbly and more quickly.

As the metro area becomes more ethnically diverse (one in four residents in the seven-county region now is a person of color, according to the Metropolitan Council), many communities are navigating the varied cultural norms around aging. Also, because younger generations are more diverse than older ones, younger adults from various ethnic backgrounds are frequently employed in positions caring for older people who are mostly white.

As with everything, behind the work are human beings who are influenced by their own priorities and circumstances. Some initiative leaders reported that convincing city officials and key staff to act was easier when those individuals themselves were older. These people can see older age on the near horizon and may also have cared for aging parents, giving them first-hand experience with the needs that can come with aging as well as insight into what could make the experience easier and better.

Cities are struggling to evolve their senior centers to support “young old” adults. Many communities’ senior centers play an important role in the lives of older residents, but most boomers—the incoming cohort of older adults—don’t identify with traditional senior centers.

### Comprehensive Plans: The Holy Grail

Comprehensive plans—or “comp” plans—are an important avenue for infusing the topic of aging into policy development. Local governments in Minnesota are required to have comp plans and to update them every 10 years. The next updates are due in 2018, and cities usually work for at least three years to create their updated plans, so the issue is timely.

A comp plan says a lot about a community. It lays out the vision for how a community wants to grow and change, and defines the policies it will use to realize that vision. At a minimum comp plans must address land use, transportation, water resources, parks and trails and housing. Elected officials use comp plans when making decisions, and the plans are the legal basis for things like zoning ordinances and subdivision regulations.

> Older adults are the experts on their own lives. Their experiences and those of their family members must guide the work.”
> —Dawn Simonson, executive director, MAAA

Some Twin Cities communities are on track to incorporate aging concerns into their 2018 plan updates—but what does that look like? This is a relatively new concept, in part because the plans are updated only once a decade, and there was limited awareness of the demographic shift during the last round.
Unlike topics such as active living and promoting healthy communities—on which more extensive work has been done to translate principles into concrete planning and policy—planning for aging is new terrain for most communities.

- In Saint Paul, the Advisory Committee on Aging was responsible for not only bringing aging to the attention of lead planners and policy makers, but persuading them that it deserved prominent attention in the comp plan update. In early 2017, as the city began writing the update, the ACOA produced a set of recommendations to help planners incorporate aging into the process.

- The Dakota County Communities for a Lifetime initiative is using a city profiles project to encourage communities to incorporate aging into their comp plans. Profiles for each city in the county are being created to reflect key demographic and other information, including adoption of age-friendly policies such as Complete Streets, active living and accessory dwelling units. The profiles will help planners better understand present and future trends and highlight the need to address changing demographics at the policy level.

Chanhassen: A View from City Planning

BeeHive Homes is a memory care development in Chanhassen. When the facility was being constructed, Sharmeen Al-Jaff, senior planner with the city, urged the developers to include a walking path to connect BeeHive to a nearby commercial area.

Now, some areas in the mall have become gathering places for BeeHive residents and their families. Many of the older adults are in wheelchairs and their family members and caregivers can easily push them along the trail. “This is an example of one of the many ways planners can make a difference. Things like this can go a long way towards a community that works for older residents,” said Al-Jaff.
Common Themes & Lessons

This section presents seven themes and lessons that emerged from our analysis.

- The work needs a champion.
- Relationships are key to success.
- Volunteers can do a lot—but not everything.
- Getting buy-in is an essential step.
- Funding is required.
- Using a framework can help but is not necessary.
- If circumstances aren’t favorable today, continue the work and be prepared to act when the timing is right.

The work needs a champion.
A proactive champion is essential, especially in early stages of the work. Many people—including elected officials and city leaders—are passively supportive, but that alone won’t produce results.

In numerous cases successes can be chalked up to the persistence and passion of a community volunteer applying personal and professional skills and knowledge to advance the work.

- In Saint Paul, for example, member leadership from the city’s Advisory Committee on Aging (ACOA) helped make incremental but significant progress on incorporating aging into the city’s planning and policy development. Support from many actors, especially key city staff, is necessary for such achievements, and the ACOA played an important role in engaging senior planning and policy staff in the aging agenda.

- WeCAB, a volunteer-based transportation program, originated in the City of Mound when a visually impaired resident pushed for a transportation service. WeCAB services later expanded when a City of Victoria resident—who also is the former mayor—organized support to bring WeCAB into Carver County. Because of her passion for transportation programs, the Victoria resident joined WeCAB’s board and leads WeCAB Carver County’s operations.

- In Maple Grove, an engaged older resident initiated conversations with the city that ultimately led it to joining the AARP age-friendly network. Age-Friendly Maple Grove is now an established initiative of the city with an active committee of volunteers and community partners and funding for a consultant to help advance the work.

- In St. Louis Park, two residents approached the city with an idea for improving health through community engagement, a concept they’d observed in England. The city helped secure significant grant funding for a three-year period to develop and launch a community-wide health initiative.

The champion for the initiative can also be a city official, a county employee or a group of community members.

- In Chanhassen, a city planner’s role includes working with the citizen-led senior commission. She helps advance the commission’s goals through city council and also happens to have a passion for supporting older adults, which
she is able to do by integrating older adult considerations into the city’s plans and projects in a variety of ways.

- The West St. Paul LOOP circulator bus was made possible with the help of several champions, including a city council member, whose active promotion of the LOOP helped engage and raise funds from local business. Living Longer and Stronger in West St. Paul, one of the most well-established lifetime communities efforts in the region, was a longtime advocate for such a service, and the group’s persistence was instrumental in making it a reality.

- Both Dakota and Carver Counties employ dedicated staff whose core function is to champion and advance the work.

- In Apple Valley and Bloomington, the mayor and city manager, respectively, drive philosophies and practices related to lifetime communities through city departments.

**Relationships are key to success.**

As with many things, strong relationships are key to making change. The built-in trust and credibility help get things done and get them done faster.

- Staff at the White Bear Lake Area Senior Program, which supports lifetime community efforts, have begun asking everyone they meet, “How can we work together?” Their approach has led to new collaborations, including with the food shelf, the library, business groups and municipalities. They also have built on existing partnerships, such as with the YMCA. The Y attracts younger-older adults who do not identify with the senior center, yet those individuals may eventually encounter age-related issues and need support that the Y is not equipped to provide. The Senior Program social worker now has an ongoing presence at the Y to help members navigate resources.

- In Saint Paul, the Advisory Committee on Aging drew on its members’ histories and connections with key community partners to gather support for its agenda and get strong attendance at its housing forum. A respected “known entity” is generally best positioned to recruit partners and inspire engagement among key influencers.

- Members of the Age-Friendly Maple Grove committee have reached out to their own networks for important contributions—such as funding and pro bono services for logo design and Russian language translation.

**Getting buy-in is an essential step.**

More communities than ever recognize the urgency surrounding the aging population and have begun to act, but many places have yet to take meaningful action. For those communities, getting buy-in from residents, community leaders and other stakeholders is essential. Several communities experienced turning points when they used demographic data and related research to open people’s eyes.

> “We’ve discovered the benefits of good old-fashioned networking. By working together we can avoid duplication, fill in the gaps, cross-promote, cross-refer and leverage resources to build our community’s capacity to serve older adults.”

—Tara Jebens-Singh, adult programs coordinator, White Bear Area Senior Program
An Advisory Committee Goes the Distance

The Saint Paul Advisory Committee on Aging (ACOA) has elevated aging as a priority for city planners and policy staff. Starting around 2011, its chief objective was to influence Saint Paul’s comprehensive plan update. That process was a couple years down the road, so in the meantime the ACOA focused on two things: move the needle on housing, a fundamental issue for older adults; and get the committee itself moved out of Parks and Recreation to another city department where it would be positioned for greater impact.

On housing, the ACOA hosted a well-attended, well-received housing forum in early 2015 that helped establish it as a knowledgeable force and generated broader interest in the work. The committee also achieved its goal of finding a new home. The ACOA had requested that it be housed in Planning and Economic Development, but the city ultimately relocated the committee to the Mayor’s Office, a significant move that signaled the city’s recognition of the importance of this work and of the ACOA’s role and influence.

- In Saint Paul, the Advisory Committee on Aging got buy-in from key city planning and policy staff by providing substantive information and engaging them in discussions about housing and other aging issues. The committee organized three successful forums, invited planning staff to key meetings and established themselves as experts on these issues.

- In Carver County, demographic data presented by a community-based nonprofit organization to county officials in 2007 resulted in the county creating an Office of Aging dedicated to working with cities to support their older residents and educating various community sectors about the impacts and opportunities of the aging population.

- In White Bear Lake, a compelling presentation about the demographic shift and other societal trends spurred the Community Services Advisory Council to create what became the Community Forum for Seniors, a school-district-wide engagement effort to create a more livable community for the aging population. The council was particularly motivated by the fact that the number of older adults in Minnesota soon will surpass the number of school-age children. Still in early stages, the Community Forum on Seniors has generated broad interest and engagement, including from elected officials.

Highlighting the alignment and significant overlap between livable and lifetime communities
may help persuade local government officials to adopt an aging lens to the city’s or county’s planning and vision. If they aspire to livability, lifetime communities’ practices and policies support what they already hope for or are trying to do.

An economic case can be made for focusing on livability for older adults. A recent report from AARP discusses how investments in livability mean a more desirable community and improve competitiveness for housing and commercial investment. Another 2016 report explores the “longevity economy”—the powerful economic force people 50 and older represent by spending more time in the workforce; holding tremendous purchasing power as consumers; contributing significantly to the federal, state and local tax base; and being an enormous market for services and products catered to their interests and needs. (See Resources section for links to both reports.)

Taking steps to make a community more attractive to older residents can be an economically persuasive case.

- The City of Apple Valley factors this into its thinking, taking a more market-based approach than other communities. It cultivates its brand as a community for a lifetime and has even worked with realtors and businesses as a means of promoting the community as a whole.
- In Chanhassen, a senior planner whose role includes older adult considerations regularly connects developers of new senior housing facilities with nearby commercial businesses so that the two can work together to mutual benefit.

Volunteers can do a lot—but not everything.

“Volunteers” can feel like an understatement when describing many of the smart, committed people whose involvement is central to many of these efforts. For several of the initiatives examined for this report, without volunteers the work simply would not exist.

“I think hiring a project manager helped make it real. Until then it was a bunch of well-intentioned volunteers who believed in the philosophy but didn’t know how to make it tangible. We really picked up momentum once we provided the structure.”

—Roger Green, chair; Woodbury THRIVES Leadership Team

However, a few common challenges surround efforts where groups of volunteers are at the core of the work.

In some cases volunteers are more like pro bono professionals willing to do heavy lifting on strategy, research, pushing the agenda with city and community leaders and so on. In other cases people are interested in lighter commitments in terms of both time and content. Both are valuable and needed, but the nature and degree of volunteer engagement needs to be managed appropriately to maximize and sustain their involvement.

Another challenge is the need to channel and focus the energy into action that stays true to community priorities. As demonstrated by their involvement, volunteers care about the effort and are willing to do the work. But what exactly is that work? In some cases the strategies, priori-
ties and actions need to be determined as part of the process. These can be difficult decisions to make in a group setting, especially one with little structure or no clear leader with the appropriate skill set.

- The White Bear Lake Area’s Community Forum on Seniors engaged an enthusiastic and responsive group of cross-sector participants, yet the lack of structure soon became an impediment to progress beyond a certain point. During a gap in staffing, the group was fortunate to be linked to a facilitator who was willing to take on a substantial pro bono role for several months. She helped the group focus its energy and ideas and provided a consistent format that helped action teams better understand their roles and impact.

- In Minneapolis, the Advisory Committee on Aging (ACOA) was charged with developing a three-year action plan for its Minneapolis for a Lifetime initiative as part of the city’s membership in the AARP age-friendly network. There was no shortage of ideas and commitment within the 17-member group, but it proved difficult to translate those things into a structured, focused plan that, even once priorities were established, would require many hours to be written, reviewed, revised etc.—an enormous task for a volunteer to see through from beginning to end. The ACOA’s city staffer was able to secure funding through AARP Minnesota and the city to hire a consultant who worked with the committee to identify priorities and craft the written plan (with significant contributions from a member with background and interest in research and writing). The completion of the plan in January 2017 was a significant accomplishment that will allow the city to move into the next phase of work on this effort.

- In Woodbury, despite high-level leadership and successful community engagement related to establishing their community health initiative, hiring a staff person who could take on key aspects of the work was a turning point. The project manager was able to pull the loose, though committed, group of volunteers into a defined frame and provided needed structure to drive it forward.

- In Eagan, the city engaged a consultant to lead Eagan Forward, a broad-based community visioning initiative that resulted in a 20-year plan for the city and six community action teams, each focused on a priority area determined by public input. The work lost a bit of focus and momentum when the consultant’s tenure was up and the number of volunteers started to dwindle. Bringing the consultant back for a meeting with community leaders renewed their energy. Without a defined (and paid) project lead at the center of the work, community-driven efforts can suffer from lack of structure.

“A lot of things that further the aging agenda are just principles of good urbanism. It would be good policy no matter what. It just so happens that it also supports aging in community.”

—Lucy Thompson, principal city planner, Saint Paul
Funding is required.
Initiatives generally land in one of three funding categories:

1. The work is embedded in communities or local government and therefore either requires no special funding or has ongoing dedicated funding.
   - Carver County, Dakota County, Chanhassen, Bloomington and Apple Valley are examples of this. Carver County’s Office of Aging leads planning for and responses to older adult issues on a county level and employs a full-time staff member. Cities with citizen-led aging commissions also devote staff time to those groups. Dakota County’s Communities for a Lifetime initiative employs a full-time staff person to advance that work. In Chanhassen, a city planner’s role includes advancing older adult concerns from that position.

   “In a way we’re all competing for people. We compete in a large marketplace, and Apple Valley has been thoughtful about building its brand as a lifetime community—a place where people of all ages can live, work and recreate.”
   —Bruce Nordquist, community development director, City of Apple Valley

   Apple Valley and Bloomington represent a different model. In both places an ethos is imbued throughout city departments by high-level leadership and guides how work is undertaken. Apple Valley’s focus is a commitment to lifetime communities driven largely by the longstanding mayor and city council, and Bloomington’s is deep community engagement and equity driven by city management leaders.

   The Saint Paul and Minneapolis Advisory Committees on Aging are made up of volunteer members, but the committees are formal parts of their cities’ structures and staffed by city employees. Both committees also occasionally apply for and receive funding from other sources for specific projects.

2. One-time or start-up funding with a need to identify new, additional or ongoing funding sources.
   - Age-Friendly Maple Grove, Woodbury THRIVES (community health initiative), WeCAB (volunteer-based transportation program) in Carver County/Westonka area, Health in the Park in St. Louis Park, Community Forum on Seniors in the White Bear Lake area, and the West St. Paul LOOP circulator bus operated by DARTS in West St. Paul are examples of this arrangement. All secured funding to launch their initiatives and get them up and running, but additional funding will be needed to sustain or expand the work.

3. No dedicated funding.
   Funding often produces two critically important outcomes. One is people-power—one with passion for the issue and the right skill set who is paid to advance a project
or the work in general. A paid person helps create or sustain momentum and ensures that work is progressing. Often professionals who are engaged in the work are doing it as one small part of their jobs (or on top of their regular responsibilities). Volunteers can do a great deal, but it can take serendipity (the right person with the right skills at the right time) to advance work at the necessary level. Funding also can provide structure, formalizing a project or effort and often creating a new level of accountability.

- Eagan Forward started with a significant investment by the city in a high-profile consultant. However, the consultant’s work is complete, and the initiative is designed to be community-driven with deliberate distance from the city, which provides some staff time but minimal funding. If the community is to own and lead the work, funding—not necessarily from the city—will be required eventually to accomplish certain objectives.

- Healthy Aging Northeast in Northeast Minneapolis is being fueled by the time and effort of the heads of three key community-based agencies who have taken on this work in addition to their usual responsibilities. They are working to create a new model of collaboration that would improve their individual and collective abilities to support older adults in the community. The effort would benefit from funding a part-time staff person who could take on administrative coordination as well as deepen the content of the work.

**Using a framework can help but is not necessary.**
While most efforts in this report do not employ a formal framework, Minneapolis and Maple Grove joined the AARP age-friendly network, and numerous places are using the ACT on Alzheimer’s toolkit and community engagement methodology to create dementia friendly communities. Dakota and Carver Counties are building on Communities for a Lifetime, the strategy laid out in Minnesota’s Transform 2010 initiative, to guide their work. Woodbury THRIVES is following the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s Culture of Health program.

The AARP network and ACT on Alzheimer’s initiatives include concrete steps and timelines for communities using those frameworks. Communities for a Lifetime, on the other hand, outlines core principles and strategies but does not prescribe a process.

For some communities committing to a formal program is desirable. Established processes and timelines, along with accountability to an outside entity, can help focus and propel the work and ensure that communities are considering all relevant aspects of community life. Member

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**“It’s very important that we acknowledge the decision makers’ efforts and contributions to the continuing support of senior projects and programs. You can do all the planning in the world, but the decision makers have to see the need—and that’s how you get things done.”**

—Sharmeen Al-Jaff, senior planner, City of Chanhassen
communities also can take advantage of resources available through the lead entity. AARP, for example, provides support and a variety of resources to network members, and, similarly, communities officially connected to ACT on Alzheimer’s gain access to technical assistance and other valuable resources.

However, being part of a framework doesn’t necessarily mean more energy or greater progress, nor does it guarantee proactive engagement of decision makers. A goal-oriented, well-organized group with a clear agenda is a powerful force for change with or without a set framework.

If circumstances aren’t favorable today, continue the work and be prepared to act when the timing is right.

Changes in leadership or other circumstances can open doors that previously were closed. When conditions were not favorable, some initiative leaders learned to do what they could and wait for a change in the winds.

- In West St. Paul, Robert Street, a key retail corridor, was under road construction for nearly two years, causing major disruptions to local traffic. To minimize disturbances and help residents—especially low-income older residents—get around during construction, the city helped fund the new West St. Paul LOOP circulator bus, something it previously had been unwilling to do. The LOOP is an affordable transportation service aimed at older adults but available to anyone. For Dakota County and Living Longer & Stronger in West St. Paul, the coalition/nonprofit behind the LOOP, the opportunity tied to these circumstances was instrumental to launching this service after the pilot project. The City of West St. Paul’s funding will not continue after road construction, yet its two-year support was critical to getting the service up and running. DARTS, now the lead organization behind the West St. Paul LOOP, as well as circulator buses in other cities, is working to further diversify its funding base to ensure the LOOP continues to operate.

- In Saint Paul, the Advisory Committee on Aging set its sights on getting aging concerns included in the city’s comprehensive plan update, but the city would not begin that planning process for a few years. In the meantime the ACOA focused on other work that would advance its agenda and laid a solid foundation for influencing the comp plan when the time came.

“ Becoming a community for a lifetime is evolving in a way that’s being incorporated into our DNA. It’s so much easier than looking at year-to-year funding for senior initiatives. It’s just what we do now.”

—Tom Lawell, city administrator, Apple Valley

- In Maple Grove, a citizen had been encouraging the city to begin some lifetime communities work and had helped organize a committee of other community members and representatives from local hospitals, churches and others. When grant funding from MAAA became available for such work a couple of years later, the city hired a consultant, and the Age-Friendly Maple Grove initiative was able to launch quickly because of the foundation that had been laid for the work.
Conclusions & Recommendations

This report explores a range of efforts—diverse in their structures and approaches—to make Twin Cities’ communities places where older adults can thrive as they age. It is intended to be a resource for people doing this work and to help us all better understand the circumstances that lead to success.

Based on the themes and lessons discussed in this report, we offer the following recommendations about ways to help communities either begin this work or strengthen work that’s already under way.

Provide assistance: information, coaching, tools.
Communities need technical assistance to help them incorporate aging considerations into their policies and planning, including comprehensive plans. This could be passive, as a set of resources for communities to explore on their own, or active, as in people or organizations who could provide language, specific recommendations and other tools on a consulting basis.

The service could be modeled after Active Living Hennepin County’s assistance to communities working to become healthier through better community design.

Create a position description for city/county planner with an aging focus.
Provide suggested language for a role or partial role that is responsible for bringing older adult considerations into all projects, planning and policy.

“Communities must pay attention to the human factor and apply their resources not only to infrastructure but also for people. Everyone in the community is important and true leadership recognizes that and acts in response.”
—Bob Roepke, immediate past-president, MAAA Board and former mayor of Chaska

Do a better job of making the case.
Framing the value and importance of age-friendly communities is a very important part of the work. Many communities could use help developing key messages and identifying compelling research to get buy-in at the decision-maker level, as well as to excite public interest in the work. Good resources exist on this topic, but it may be helpful to compile a “highlights reel” of some of the best material as an easy reference guide. In some cases more research is needed, such as on the economic impact of the loss of older adults from a community. Many cities know little about this but may find it a persuasive angle.
Make it real and readily available.
Even for those who understand it in the abstract, most people could benefit from knowing more about how an age-friendly community performs and what steps to take to get there. This report begins to answer some of these questions, but a set of resources could be provided (many of which already exist) that includes examples of “age-friendly in action” under various domains. Information should include some of the best nuggets of information and resources available, including the name of an expert in the field available to contact. MAAA might “take the show on the road” to continue educating local governments, citizens, aging services providers and others about lifetime communities.

Create opportunities for communities to learn from each other.
Each community does the work under its own unique circumstances, but they still have much to learn from each other. With so many places endeavoring to become age-friendly, a forum for leaders to gather and share lessons, insights, challenges and ideas could be invaluable. MAAA’s Lifetime Communities Learning and Action Collaborative used this approach, bringing together mini-grant recipients to discuss their progress and challenges.

Elevate work to the regional government level.
To develop better alignment among local governments throughout the region, lifetime communities should be incorporated into the work of the Metropolitan Council and other regional planning entities. MAAA is in a good position to provide leadership for this action.

Make funding available.
Many efforts need funding, either to continue their overall work, or to undertake specific projects. Statewide, regional and local entities should make funding this type of work a priority. Organizations such as MAAA could help communities make the case for the work (including the funding of it) as well as provide resources to support communities in their search for funding (e.g., tips for how to approach businesses, foundations and civic groups with funding requests).

Develop an education campaign to attract and keep volunteers.
In almost every community, dedicated volunteers are an essential element in preparing the community for an aging demographic. Maintaining momentum among the volunteers’ work is a common challenge, and many communities would benefit from resources to help them succeed in doing so.

Use neutral facilitation to advance collaboration.
Organizations seeking to collaborate to support older adults in more sophisticated and effective ways could benefit from a neutral facilitator to guide that process. An objective third party with some expertise in this arena but no agenda to push beyond advancing the collaboration would smooth some of the difficulties presented when different groups unaccustomed to working this way come together at the table.

Encourage and support civic engagement and leadership of older adults and their family caregivers.
Older adults and their care partners belong at the heart of creating lifetime communities, yet effective means of engaging them aren’t always clear. Communities could use support ranging from being connected to existing resources and best practices on this subject to expert consulting (and funding for such) to develop a campaign or strategy for a specific community.
Initiative Profiles

The following contains profiles of 17 lifetime-community-type initiatives around the seven-county Twin Cities region. The initiatives included represent a cross section of efforts but are not exhaustive.

- Apple Valley
- Bloomington
- Office of Aging, Carver County*
- Chanhassen
- Communities for a Lifetime Initiative, Dakota County*
- WeCAB program, Carver County and Mound/Westonka
- Eagan Forward
- Age-Friendly Maple Grove *
- Minneapolis for a Lifetime *
- Healthy Aging Northeast, Minneapolis*
- Health in the Park, St. Louis Park
- Advisory Committee on Aging, Saint Paul*
- West St. Paul LOOP Circulator Bus
- Living Longer and Stronger in West St. Paul
- Community Forum on Seniors, White Bear Lake Area
- Consortium on Lakes Area Senior Services (CLASS), White Bear Lake Area
- Woodbury THRIVES

*Recipients of Lifetime Communities grants from MAAA through support of the Greater Twin Cities United Way
Apple Valley

Snapshot
Apple Valley has a longstanding commitment, driven by high-level city leadership, to becoming a community for a lifetime. Top priorities include its downtown Central Village and improving walkability for all ages. Apple Valley’s market-based-leaning approach includes building its brand as a lifetime community and developing numerous senior housing complexes situated near retail and services.

Origins
The city’s longstanding mayor (since 1999) and experienced, stable city council are major drivers.

Structure/Scope
This is a citywide approach infused across all departments. Apple Valley has concentrated efforts on its pedestrian-oriented Central Village district, including developing senior housing there; maximizing its location on the METRO Red Line (bus rapid transit); and developing walkable areas of the city. It has added numerous senior housing facilities in response to market demand and has a large and active senior center with extensive programming. In 2014 Apple Valley partnered with senior housing and service provider Ecumen and national and international businesses on Vitalocity!, an initiative to improve the city’s age-friendliness.

Timeline
This is an ongoing effort and will expand in the future to include aging in place strategies.

Funding
There is no dedicated funding as this is not a discrete initiative. Apple Valley contributed staff time and funding to age-friendly initiative Vitalocity! in 2014.

Key Leaders
The long-time mayor champions the work; the city council supports it through land use planning and budgetary decision-making. Key staff and department heads actively advance the mission.

Partners
Dakota County Communities for a Lifetime Initiative; Ecumen

Success Factors
- Forward-thinking city leaders who are tuned in to impacts of an aging demographic
- Partnering with Dakota County Communities for a Lifetime Initiative on projects such as improving walkability and developing the North Greenway Trail
- Cultivating a positive working relationship between business and local government

Accomplishments
- Cultivating an identity as a lifetime community
- Developing centrally located senior housing near shops and services
- Making age-friendly adaptations to parks

Challenges
- Uncovering the needs of older adults living in the community (vs. in senior housing)
- Adapting senior center offerings to attract and serve boomers as well as older residents

Contact
Bruce Nordquist,
bnordquist@ci.apple-valley.mn.us
Snapshots
A leadership change resulted in an effort to create a new level of public participation that ensures that city services reflect the community being served. The city is working to engage residents of all races and ages in the work of government and is providing staff training on equity and diversity.

Origins
A change in city management in 2015 brought a philosophical shift emphasizing deep community engagement in local government—a swing away from the city’s more traditional view of government since the 1990s (e.g., focus on basic city services and elimination of many citizen advisory groups).

Structure/Scope
Systems are being created to ensure that citizens’ voices—particularly those who have been underrepresented or underserved—are heard and reflected in city services. City employees are receiving training and education on diversity and inclusion and on maximizing participation in local government internally and externally.

Timeline
The work began in 2015 and is ongoing.

Funding
The city is funding training and education for its staff to build their capacity to support these goals.

Partners
Bloomington School District helps provide/facilitate “Beyond Diversity” training. Local businesses and nonprofit organizations receive free or reduced rates for office/program space at city facilities, making services more accessible for older adults.

Success Factors
- Experienced and forward-thinking city leadership
- Willingness to dedicate resources to educating and training staff at all levels
- Membership in national network to help government advance racial equity
- Participation in statewide consortium of government entities working to improve service to citizens through enhanced coordination
- Accredited city-level public health department is a resource for older adults

Accomplishments
- Engaged more city departments (e.g., human services) in the comprehensive planning process to strengthen the plan and reduce siloes between departments
- Co-sponsored Evolve: Re-igniting Self & Community, a Vital Aging Network leadership program for older adults, through which participants developed community projects with ideas or solutions for Bloomington

Challenges
- Uncovering and meeting the needs of older adults from varying ethnic and cultural backgrounds
- Adapting senior center offerings and operations to attract and serve boomers as well as older generations
- Integrating people with various stages of dementia into senior center programs

Contact
Lorinda Pearson, lpearson@bloomingtonmn.gov
**Office of Aging, Carver County**

**Snapshot**
Carver County’s 65-plus population will quadruple between 2000 and 2030. The county created an **Office of Aging** in 2007 to prepare for this shift. The Office of Aging is staffed by a Public Health program specialist who provides support and technical assistance to cities in the county, often through cities’ aging commissions.

**Origins**
In 2007 the county, compelled by changing demographics, created its Office of Aging, largely to prevent an exodus of boomer residents, whose attitudes and expectations about aging differ considerably from previous generations.

**Structure/Scope**
The Office of Aging provides technical support to cities, primarily through city-level aging commissions, which exist in five of the county’s 11 cities. It educates residents, businesses, civic groups and school districts about the aging population. It also is working to better support older members of the increasingly ethnically diverse population, partnering with the Eastern Carver County School District’s Community Education department to encourage dialogue, develop common understanding and goals, and coordinate services to foster an inclusive community.

**Timeline**
The work is ongoing.

**Funding**
The Office of Aging is positioned in the Carver County Public Health Department and is supported by county and local public health funding.

**Key Leaders**
Office of Aging staff; members of the aging commissions

**Partners**
The Office of Aging partners with cities, mostly through the aging commissions, and collaborates with the Eastern Carver County School District’s Community Education department.

**Success Factors**
- Dedicated staff to advance the work.
- Conditions that allow for more nimble responses. With smaller cities, decision-makers are often just a phone call away, and work can get done quickly.
- No time spent managing grants or budgets—just doing the work.

**Accomplishments**
- Creating a forum for city-level aging commissions around the county to come together and learn from each other
- Helping cities identify opportunities for collaboration

**Challenges**
- Few nonprofits to partner with, due to the (false) perception that in this wealthy county, no need exists for such services.

**Contact**
Jennifer Anderson, janderson@co.carver.mn.us
Communities for a Lifetime Initiative, Dakota County

Snapshot
The Dakota County Communities for a Lifetime (CFL) initiative engages community members and leaders in the private and public sectors to create accessible, supportive communities that enable people to lead active, vital lives. CFL is part of Dakota County’s Public Health Department.

Origins
In 2006, Dakota County undertook a broad-based, collaborative effort (led by nonprofit DARTS) to examine the impacts of the aging population. It subsequently launched a county-wide CFL initiative, with leadership from the then-new director of human services. A full-time employee was hired in 2012 to lead the initiative.

Scope/Structure
CFL works to: 1) increase awareness of demographic changes and the need for community-level responses; 2) help communities plan and take action; and 3) develop best practice models, pilots and community projects.

Timeline
CFL got underway with the hiring of a dedicated staff person in 2012. The work is ongoing with no timeline attached.

Funding
Dakota County; MAAA Lifetime Communities grant funding

Key Leaders
CFL program manager

Key Partners
Cities of Dakota County; City of West St. Paul (for the WSP LOOP); Living Longer & Stronger in WSP; Hastings Boomer Advisory Council, Community Education; Mendota Heights Active Adults group; Apple Valley Senior Center, Education and Service Committee; Dakota County Community Development Agency; DARTS; and Neighbors, Inc.

Success Factors
- Establishing a role within government that focuses on aging-related issues
- Engaging city governments from the beginning and creating partnerships in communities
- Building relationships around smaller projects before larger projects are promoted

Accomplishments
- Engaged communities through community dialogues
- Created new educational tools (e.g., presentations, video, annual forum)
- Established and supported “CFL workgroups” to plan age-friendly communities
- Created model assessment tools, resources and programs with concrete outcomes
- Developed city profiles to examine age-friendliness of Dakota County cities

Challenges
- Reconciling the slow pace of such work with the urgency of the issue
- Funding projects
- Meeting communities where they are and not where you want them to be
- Sustaining engagement of workgroups/coalitions over time

Contact
Jess Luce, Jess.Luce@co.dakota.mn.us
WeCAB Program, Carver County and Mound/Westonka

Snapshot

WeCAB is a volunteer-based transportation program in Carver County and the Mound/Westonka area that was created through the initiative of a Mound citizen. Volunteer drivers use their personal vehicles to provide rides to adults who are unable to drive for a variety of reasons. Riders pay, if able, based on a monthly contribution invoice; WeCAB does not deny rides because of inability to contribute.

Origins

A visually-impaired citizen approached the City of Mound for transportation assistance after he lost his usual mode of transport. The Mound city manager took an interest and, with city council support, helped to launch WeCAB. A Victoria resident learned of WeCAB and helped expand the program to Carver County.

Structure/Scope

WeCAB is a 501c3 nonprofit organization run mostly by volunteers, who serve as rider registrars, dispatchers and drivers. WeCAB is considered a supplemental service that fills local transit gaps. WeCAB provided more than 2,108 one-way rides in fiscal year 2015–16.

Timeframe

WeCAB launched in Mound/Westonka (Hennepin County) in 2011. Following a geographic expansion, WeCAB began service in Carver County in October 2014.

Funding

WeCAB receives funding from Ridgeview Medical Center, Carver County, several Carver County cities and SouthWest Transit, as well as organizations such as Rotary and Lions clubs.

Partners

WeCAB funders are also primary partners

Key Leaders

Volunteer board members, who are from local churches, schools and communities

Success Factors

- Passionate and knowledgeable volunteers
- Sufficient funding (for current capacity)
- Strong community support

“Out here, we don’t have buses that pull up every 5-10 blocks. They just don’t exist. The beauty of WeCAB is that it’s almost like a little neighborhood transportation network. And that’s probably the future until the population reaches a level that can support public transportation.”

—Mary Hershberger Thun,
WeCAB Board member and former mayor of Victoria

Accomplishments

- Getting significant ridership from the beginning
- Helping to fill a transportation gap for older adults and others with limited mobility

Challenges

- Finding new volunteer leaders with similar passion when current leaders step aside
- Having limited capacity for administration and operations, which could hamper growth
- Expanding geographically brought growing pains with new partners and leaders
- Ongoing fundraising, including for part-time staffing

Contact

Mary Hershberger Thun, mlhthun@icloud.com
Snapshot
Chanhassen formed Carver County’s first senior commission in 1990 and also designated a city planner to work with the commission and advocate for older adult needs. Both the commission and city planner continue that work today, and, as a result, have well-organized older adults in the community whose voices are heard and responded to.

Origins
In 1990 the city did a survey of older adult needs in the community and got a huge response. Chanhassen then created what was the first senior commission in the county (there now are four more) to continue studying these needs and begin addressing priorities that emerged from the survey. Also at that time, a city planner, who still is there today, became a designated advocate for older adult needs.

Structure/Scope
The senior commission reviews issues such housing, information and referral services, transportation, operations, etc. The commission meets with the city council once a year to share its goals and works with a city planner on an ongoing basis.

Timeframe
The work is ongoing.

Funding
The senior commission has a limited budget but sometimes receives additional funding from the city council.

Key Partners
Carver County’s Office of Aging

Key Success Factors
- Opportunities to learn from the other senior commissions in Carver County
- City planner with a passion for working with older adults
- Decision makers who support the elderly in the community

Accomplishments
- Facilitating and supporting an organized older adult population
- Convincing the MN Department of Transportation to extend pedestrian crossing times on highways and city traffic engineers to do the same for local streets
- Offering the CarFit program to help optimize older drivers’ safety and comfort
- Joining the ACT on Alzheimer’s program to become a dementia friendly community
- Constructing senior housing

Challenges
- Anticipating and responding to the needs and desires of the next generation of older adults

Contact
Sharmeen Al-Jaff, SAl-Jaff@ci.chanhassen.mn.us
Eagan Forward

Snapshot
The City of Eagan launched Eagan Forward, a community-wide visioning initiative, to hear from residents about their hopes and wishes for the community. That consultant-led process resulted in a 20-year plan being driven by the community itself. Citizen-led teams are carrying out six identified strategies.

Origins
The city council wanted to move beyond internal goal setting and ask residents what kind of community they envisioned for future generations. The city invested in a high profile and dynamic consultant to lead the initiative.

Structure and Scope
Eagan Forward generated six strategies (including Keep Seniors Engaged) influenced by the community; each has a community-led action team. The teams are deliberately distanced from the city to ensure Eagan Forward is the community’s plan.

Timeframe
Eagan Forward was rolled out in January 2016 and is a 20-year vision. Teams continue to meet and dialogue with the city as steps are taken to carry out the strategies.

Funding
The city hired a consultant to launch Eagan Forward, and its communications department led promotion of the initiative. There is no additional dedicated funding. Some city staff time is spent on Eagan Forward, and the city also hosts the web page.

Key Leaders
Several residents who are passionate about the community and specific efforts (e.g., older adults, art, walkability, etc.) are taking the lead to carry out the vision. City leaders provide continuity and organization of the effort.

Partners
Dakota County and several non-profit organizations

Success Factors
- The city’s leadership and willingness to invest in a community-wide initiative
- An experienced consultant to launch the process and generate excitement

Accomplishments
- Fostering unprecedented level of engagement in the community
- Introducing new concepts to the comp plan as a result of Eagan Forward—such as improving the bike plan and walkability

Key Challenges
- Finding a balance between citizen-developed requests and the city’s willingness or ability to help fund them
- Managing a 20-year timeframe, which can be hard especially for older adults
- Expanding the purview of the financially conservative city to support identified priorities, e.g., transit improvements and new meeting space
- Creating needed structure in a community-led initiative

Contact
Dianne Miller, DMiller@cityofeagan.com

“There’s something about Eagan Forward that is a ‘feel’—the spirit of the community really comes through.”
—Dianne Miller, assistant city administrator, Eagan

“There’s something about Eagan Forward that is a ‘feel’—the spirit of the community really comes through.”
—Dianne Miller, assistant city administrator, Eagan
Age-Friendly Maple Grove

Snapshot
The City of Maple Grove joined the AARP age-friendly network in 2016 and is in early phases of that work. Age-Friendly Maple Grove is led by a growing committee of community residents; a city staffer; a grant-funded consultant; and representatives from hospitals, churches, a senior housing development, and more.

Origins
A community member initiated conversations with the city and this evolved into the city eventually joining the age-friendly network.

Structure and Scope
Age-Friendly Maple Grove is following the AARP age-friendly network process; it uses that program’s eight domains of livability to guide its work. A city-staffed committee of volunteers and partner organizations largely drive the initiative.

Timeframe
As a member of the age-friendly network, Maple Grove is in year one of a five-year process, which then repeats. The initiative wrapped up a community assessment of older adult needs in early 2017 and is using the findings to develop an action plan.

Funding
Maple Grove received a MAAA Lifetime Communities grant that was used to hire a consultant who helped advance the work.

Key Leaders
Maple Grove’s city administrator is a strong supporter of the work; the city’s senior coordinator, who heads up the senior center, is an important leader.

Partners
The Age-Friendly Maple Grove committee includes citizens and representatives from local hospitals, churches and senior housing developments.

Success Factors
- Engaged, informed, goal-oriented committee members who also call on their own networks and employers to help advance the work
- Competent staffing and leadership from the city’s senior coordinator and strong support from the city administrator
- Funds to hire a consultant who helps provide structure and sustain momentum

Accomplishments
- Sustained active volunteer participation
- Built momentum and engaged multiple sectors (e.g., fire and police departments)

Challenges
- Ongoing funding for consultant to help keep work moving forward
- Changing the community mindset
- Demographics are starting to shift, but Maple Grove has been a relatively young city for a very long time.
- Getting participation from residents of diverse cultural backgrounds

Contact
Kris Orluck, KOrluck@maplegrovenn.gov
Minneapolis for a Lifetime

Snapshot
Minneapolis for a Lifetime (MFL) is a community-wide strategy, launched in 2012, to improve the city’s age-friendliness. The city joined the AARP age-friendly network in 2015 and is blending this with MFL. The city’s Advisory Committee on Aging (ACOA) was restructured in 2013 and plays a lead role in the work.

Origins
When 2010 Census data indicated a loss of older adults, alarmed city council members helped launch MFL. As part of internal restructuring, a new position was created whose role included advancing MFL. The ACOA also was reorganized around this time to increase its influence and emphasize its value.

Structure and Scope
The Department of Neighborhood and Community Relations facilitated a cross-sector process to develop the MFL strategy in 2012–13. Minneapolis joined the AARP age-friendly network in 2015, and the ACOA is developing the required action plan, which will align with MFL. City departments and elected officials will lead implementation; ACOA will monitor and evaluate the work and facilitate progress.

Timeframe
As a member of the AARP age-friendly network, Minneapolis is following the program’s four-phase, five-year process. Its forthcoming action plan will run to 2020.

Funding
The city received a MAAA Lifetime Communities grant for MFL. AARP also has helped fund this work. The Department of Neighborhood and Community Relations member staffs the ACOA and also has provided some funding.

Key Leaders
Two city council members in particular have helped push this agenda; the Department of Neighborhood and Community Relations is an important driver.

Partners
The MFL Steering Committee was made up of representatives from city departments, community-based organizations and business and government partners.

Success Factors
- Restructuring the ACOA to elevate its role and influence
- Engaging highly committed members for the ACOA committee, who have gone above and beyond what members have historically done
- Funding to advance the work at key points

Accomplishments
- Increased monetary resources directed at initiatives that focus on aging

Key Challenges
- Competing with other complex and high profile issues facing the city
- Securing a proactive champion for the work at the decision-maker level
- Dealing with political shifts as council members can turn over every four years
- Crafting the right messages, including linking aging with related city-wide issues
- Gathering data and building understanding concerning the needs of older adults from ethnically and culturally diverse backgrounds

Contact
Christina Kendrick, christina.kendrick@minneapolismn.gov
Healthy Aging Northeast, Minneapolis

Snapshot
Three key providers of older adult services and housing in northeast Minneapolis are attempting to build on initial collaborative efforts and work together on a new level to help older adults age successfully in their homes and communities.

Origins
Catholic Eldercare convened a small group of organizations and businesses to discuss developing a new level of collaboration that would help older adults age in community and remain out of long-term care facilities. Out of this series of meetings came Story Circles, a program to address social isolation. Efforts toward greater collaboration more broadly continue as Healthy Aging Northeast.

Scope and Structure
A Story Circle is a group-facilitated process where older adults connect with others by sharing their stories. Due to the program’s success, additional funding was secured to compile the tools and share them with other organizations. Healthy Aging Northeast involves three key organizations working on a new model of coordination to help older adults age successfully in community. Each organization is leading its own small initiative with community involvement and coordinated with the other two partners.

Timeline
The Story Circles launched in 2013; Catholic Eldercare and East Side Neighborhood Services continue to implement the program with plans for outreach to the community from there. Healthy Aging Northeast work began in 2015 and is ongoing.

Funding
A MAAA Lifetime Communities grant helped fund Story Circles; the University of Minnesota School of Medicine contributes faculty time to Healthy Aging Northeast.

Key Leaders
Heads of three agencies: Catholic Eldercare (housing), East Side Neighborhood Services (human services), and Neighborhood HealthSource (community clinic)

Partners
University of MN School of Medicine

Success Factors
- The unique character of the community and its commitment to the wellbeing of all who call northeast Minneapolis home
- Community leaders willing to undertake systems-level change

Accomplishments
- Creating a replicable program (Story Circles) that helps address social isolation

Challenges
- Developing a sustainable model of coordination that works across different organizations’ missions, funding structures, and constituents
- Identifying a neutral facilitator and necessary funding to guide collective action work
- Getting a city council member champion and working in the context of a young city
- Navigating psychological divides concerning city neighborhoods (downtown and northeast are perceived as different worlds)

Contact
Dan Johnson, djohnson@catholiceldercare.org
Health in the Park, St. Louis Park

**Snapshot**
This well-publicized initiative launched in 2013 to promote better health for all residents through meaningful community engagement. It is housed at the city but is heavily driven by the community and community partners. When major funding expired, the initiative lost its dedicated staff, but the work lives on in a second-phase iteration.

**Origins**
After observing a program in London that was helping a community become healthier through community engagement, two St. Louis Park residents approached the city about starting something similar. The city helped initiate the process, and an organizational development coordinator applied for the grant with help from volunteers.

**Structure/Scope**
The initiative focuses on three areas: active living, better eating and mental health, which the community identified as an especially high priority. Each focus area has a community action team. During the three-year funding period, staff and consultants hired by the city’s organizational development team led the work. The city, its partners, and the community action teams remain involved but with fewer resources.

**Timeframe**
The initiative was funded for three years and now lives on in a modified iteration within the city. Community partners and a set of citizens remain closely engaged.

**Funding**
The Center for Prevention at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota provided a significant three-year grant that primarily funded staffing. Community partners have provided program resources. The city contributed some staff time and continues to do so.

**Key Leaders**
Volunteer community champions; key city staff and consultants

**Partners**
School district (including community education) and Park Nicollet Hospital

**Success Factors**
- Major funding to launch the initiative and get it underway
- Appetite for this work within the community
- Alignment with existing efforts to support active living
- Working with Hennepin County on issues like health equity and incorporating health into the comp plan update

**Accomplishments**
- Strong community engagement in initial community conversations
- Involvement of many community institutions
- Unique community member-institution partnership to accomplish goals
- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) leading community classes on mental health

**Challenges**
- Ramping up active involvement at the decision-maker level
- Sustaining momentum

**Contact**
Laura Smith, lsmith@stlouispark.org
Advisory Committee on Aging, Saint Paul

**Snapshot**

*Saint Paul’s Advisory Committee on Aging* (ACOA) has played a key role in elevating the issue of aging among key city planning and policy staff as well as in the community. As a result of its substantial work, aging will be included in Saint Paul’s 20-year comprehensive plan.

**Origins**

The Saint Paul ACOA was established in the 1990s by then-Mayor Jim Scheibel to promote the dignity and independence of older residents.

**Structure and Scope**

ACOA determines its own agenda. This summary focuses on efforts since 2012 as the ACOA achieved specific goals: 1) an administrative move from Parks and Recreation to the Mayor’s Office; and 2) recommendations for the city’s comprehensive plan update with emphasis on housing, transportation and healthy aging as fundamental issues for older adults in Saint Paul. It also has begun efforts to encourage greater city-county collaboration in planning for healthy aging.

**Timeline**

The ACOA’s work is ongoing but is subject to ebb and flow according to circumstances including committee membership and city financial support.

**Funding**

A MAAA Lifetime Communities grant to undertake an exploratory study on the city’s readiness for an aging population. Generally, there is no funding other than the city providing limited staff assistance for the committee.

**Key Leaders**

The ACOA members; City of Saint Paul senior planning and policy staff.

**Partners**

Saint Paul District Councils (neighborhood level governance) as time and interest might allow in the future; potentially Saint Paul-Ramsey County Public Health

**Key Success Factors**

- Persistence through periods of inactivity beyond its control
- Working relationships with key people and organizations
- Committee leaders with the skills and knowledge to navigate the system and understand what needed to be done to bring about change

**Accomplishments**

- Influencing planners to include aging issues in the city’s comprehensive plan update
- Hosting two successful forums (on housing and on the comp planning process)
- Reframing the issue by changing the language: “aging in community” rather than “aging in place”

**Challenges**

- Upcoming leadership changes in the committee may affect progress

**Contact**

Ana Vang, ana.vang@ci.stpaul.mn.us

“ACOA promotes aging in community, which creates supportive neighborhoods and networks, thus enhancing quality of life for older adults at home—a true measure of success for their communities.”

—*Kathleen Kelso*, chair, Saint Paul Advisory Committee on Aging
Snapshot
The LOOP launched in 2015 as an affordable transportation service aimed at older adults in West St. Paul. This circulator bus runs on Robert Street once a week for five hours. The program was jointly created by Living Longer and Stronger in West St. Paul (LLS), Dakota County, the City of West St. Paul, and DARTS.

Origins
The LOOP was largely developed by DARTS, a community-based nonprofit organization, and LLS, a cross-sector initiative (which includes the city and county) that supports older adults in West St. Paul. The LOOP was a longstanding goal of LLS and part of an organizational transition for DARTS. The city and county contributed funding and staff time to help residents get around during a lengthy road construction project.

Structure/Scope
The LOOP was designed for older adults but is available to anybody. Two buses run the first four Wednesdays of the month from 10 AM to 3 PM, stopping at businesses and older adult housing complexes. A $2 donation is requested. DARTS developed the schedule and operates the buses.

Timeline
The LOOP launched in 2015, and service is intended to continue indefinitely.

Funding
The LOOP is community-funded by the city, county, local businesses (some through marketing dollars), and passenger fares. DARTS is seeking additional funding.

Key Leaders and Partners
LLS in West St. Paul members, including Dakota County Communities for a Lifetime Initiative program manager; City of West St. Paul assistant city manager and a council member; DARTS’ president and transportation director

Success Factors
- Timing created opportunity. The city stepped in with funding to help minimize disruption during construction on Robert Street, a key retail corridor in West St. Paul.
- Staying present and visible: connecting with businesses and people in the community.
- Being community funded eliminates red tape that comes with government grants.
- Getting businesses on board, with significant help from the city

Accomplishments
- Providing and testing an innovative, local solution to fill a recognized transit gap
- Attracting riders with diversity in age and ethnicity
- Creating a sense of a community among riders

Challenges
- Identifying ongoing funding sources
- Addressing issues around a shrinking advisory group
- Convincing resistant decision makers to support similar services in other cities
- Being a few years ahead of the demographic curve.

Contact
Courtney Whited, courtney.whited@darts1.org
Living Longer and Stronger in West St. Paul

Snapshot
Living Longer and Stronger in West St. Paul (LLS) is a longstanding resident-driven initiative involving nonprofits, businesses, and city and county government. It aims to make West St. Paul a community for a lifetime by preparing for the aging population. LLS is active and continues to produce tangible and intangible outcomes.

Origins
In 2006 Dakota County launched a broad-based, collaborative aging initiative to formally examine the impacts of the aging population. Among many other things, it included community engagement and visioning sessions, and LLS emerged out of that work. It is one of the oldest lifetime communities’ efforts in the Twin Cities metro area.

Structure/Scope
LLS members meet monthly to discuss community needs, give input on community programs, plan events and support each other in the community. They have done significant work on transportation (e.g., West St. Paul LOOP Circulator Bus), created a resource directory for older adults and supported aging in community.

Timeframe
LLS formed around 2007 and remains active today. The group meets monthly and work is ongoing.

Funding
LLS collects member dues, which provide a small source of income. It has received limited project-based funding from Dakota County’s Communities for a Lifetime program and MAAA.

Key Leaders and Partners
Community and nonprofit leaders; Dakota County Communities for a Lifetime Initiative; City of West St. Paul

Success Factors
- A solid structure to guide its work
- A champion on the city council
- Support from Dakota County Communities for a Lifetime Initiative
- Longer tenure than comparable initiatives, which lends credibility to the group

Accomplishments
- Co-leading launch of the LOOP Circulator Bus, which established a model for DARTS (nonprofit partner) and other communities
- Establishing itself as a voice for older adults in the community
- Creating a resource directory for older adults and their families
- Developing projects focusing on boomers
- Holding community meetings on aging topics

Challenges
- Maintaining membership and leadership over the years
- Having adequate funding for projects
- Narrowing the group’s focus to areas of impact

Contact
Jess Luce, Jess.Luce@co.dakota.mn.us
Community Forum on Seniors, White Bear Lake Area

**Snapshot**
The Community Forum on Seniors (CFS) is a cross-sector group working together since 2015 to gather information, foster discussion and encourage citizen-based action to create an age-friendly community. The guiding concept is “community-based, community-focused, community-driven.”

**Origins**
The Community Services Advisory Council, part of the White Bear Lake Area school district, took action after hearing a presentation on demographic and related societal shifts. It commissioned a survey of older adults and launched an effort with no definitive plan but with the idea that survey findings would determine the work.

**Structure/Scope**
While the ultimate structure of the group continues to evolve, a steering committee anchors the initiative. Five action teams formed based on priorities identified in the community survey. The CFS coordinates closely with White Bear Area Senior Program, the Consortium of Lakes Area Senior Services (CLASS), and other key partners.

**Timeframe**
The CFS launched in early 2016 and continues to work to define its scope and structure. At a community event in early 2017, CFS will unveil a new brochure and present a video produced to document the impact and achievements of the initiative.

**Funding**
Several cities and townships, as well as local business, nonprofit and community organizations supported the survey and specific projects with funding and in-kind donations (e.g., supplies and staff). Additional funding will be sought for future initiatives.

**Key Leaders**
Steering committee members, which include individuals serving older adults in several capacities through their professional roles and related councils and boards

**Partners**
A multitude of individuals and organizations have been actively engaged—including a Ramsey County Commissioner, former legislators, local mayors and council members, and a community newspaper publisher

**Success Factors**
- Recognition of community needs and a willingness to form a community-level response
- Strong interest, involvement and collaboration across public and private sectors
- Pro bono services of a professional facilitator

**Accomplishments**
- Formed committees and action teams to address and collaborate on specific initiatives
- Produced a Senior Housing Guide in conjunction with a community senior housing tour
- Worked to develop a pilot transportation program for older adults that would complement existing services (grant funding to launch program TBD)

**Challenges**
- Navigating multiple priorities through various stages of feasibility and accountability
- Determining the group’s structure and function
- Identifying funding sources
- Maintaining momentum and sustaining people’s interest and participation

**Contact:** Tara Jebens-Singh, tara.jebens-singh@isd624.org
**Snapshot**
CLASS is a longstanding initiative serving older adults in the northeast metro. Now a nonprofit organization covering 17 communities, CLASS members include older adult programs, school districts, nonprofit organizations, housing agencies, health and wellness agencies, faith communities and engaged citizens. It advocates for older adults and is an information clearinghouse for older adult services and programs.

**Origins**
In 2006 CLASS formed as the Senior Services Focus Group, made up of representatives from around the White Bear Lake Area School District (seven municipalities). The initiative has since expanded its geographic reach to include three additional school districts and become a 501c3 nonprofit organization.

**Structure/Scope**
CLASS operates with a board of directors. Monthly meetings provide a forum for its cross-sector members to share information, exchange ideas and troubleshoot challenges. CLASS also has sponsored community programs.

**Timeframe**
CLASS launched in 2006 and has evolved over the past decade. The organization is active and the work is ongoing.

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**Funding**
As a 501c3 nonprofit organization, CLASS is eligible to receive grant funding and private donations.

**Key Leaders and Partners**
Elected officials, churches, municipalities, school district, local media, nonprofits, health organizations and MAAA

**Success Factors**
- Shared vision
- Ability to work beyond individual organizations’ territories or focus areas
- Members’ combined resources—knowledge, staff time, communications, and more

**Accomplishments**
- Regular meetings of the group elevate the work of each individual organization
- Hosted high quality educational programs
- Fostered professional and organizational networking and leveraging of resources
- Advocated for Ramsey County to provide bridge funds to Meals on Wheels programs following the loss of Title III funds

**Challenges**
- Lack of funding
- Attrition of members can mean loss of organizational representation and/or leadership.
- Recognized within professional circles but less recognized among general public

**Contact**
Tara Jebens-Singh, tara.jebens-singh@isd624.org
Woodbury THRIVES

Snapshot
Woodbury THRIVES is an active grassroots effort centered on community health. It involves high-level leaders and numerous multi-sector partners. Current efforts are focused on developing action plan recommendations based on extensive community input.

Origins
Dave Durenberger, former U.S. Senator from Minnesota, told a Woodbury leadership group about the importance of social determinants of health in 2014. He encouraged grassroots action using this approach. Attendees felt inspired to act. A small group of people, including the mayor, president of the Chamber of Commerce and the Woodbury Community Foundation, moved forward.

Structure/Scope
Woodbury THRIVES models the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s culture of health work. Leaders talked to people in the community to determine interest in the work for the first year, then hired a part-time project manager to get things off the ground. A Community Action Task Force of 40 organizations meets regularly; more than 350 people provided input in 24 community conversation sessions.

Funding
Woodbury THRIVES received grants from HealthEast and the Woodbury Community Foundation. It will raise $10,000 to take it through spring 2017 from smaller donations; HealthPartners, Tria Orthopedics and AARP MN have donated $3,000 to date.

Timeframe
Begun in 2014 the work is ongoing; future direction is being developed

Key Leaders and Partners
Founders include City of Woodbury, Woodbury Area Chamber of Commerce, Washington County, Woodbury Community Foundation, HealthEast. Forty organizations now are involved.

Success Factors
- Grassroots engagement of community leaders and a cross-section of the community
- Coaching from the County Health Rankings and Roadmaps and professional support from HealthEast and Washington County
- Keeping the vision alive while taking the necessary time to obtain broad community input

Accomplishments
- Hosting a successful Community Leader Forum with 69 in attendance who endorsed the concept and offered advice on direction
- Engaging 40 organizations in project development and hundreds of residents in Community Conversations

Challenges
- Addressing needs in a way that excites community leaders and organizations

Contact
Roger Green, info@woodburyfoundation.org
Resources

Aging in Community Policy Guide

The Case for Age-Friendly Communities

Global Age-Friendly Cities: A Guide

The Livability Economy: People, Places and Prosperity
AARP, 2016.

The Longevity Economy: Generating economic growth and new opportunities for business

Making Your Community Livable for All Ages: What’s Working!
National Association of Area Agencies on Aging, 2015.

Where We Live: Communities for All Ages – 100+ Inspiring Ideas for America’s Mayors
AARP, 2016.
APPENDIX 2

Methods

The objective of this research was to learn where and in what capacity lifetime-communities-type work is taking place around the seven-county Twin Cities region (Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott and Washington Counties). Research was conducted through phone interviews of leaders engaged in efforts to make their communities more livable for all ages or specifically for older adults. To identify initial contacts, MAAA began with its knowledge of existing and recent efforts, and the list grew based on interviewee recommendations of additional people and initiatives to consult.

The efforts and initiatives included in the report are not intended to be a comprehensive compendium, but rather as known significant work that, examined collectively, reflects a reasonably accurate portrait of age-friendly strategies and actions being taken in the Twin Cities metro. The initiative profiles also should not be considered complete pictures of the work in each place. Time and scope constraints required that enough information be gathered to accurately represent each effort but did not allow for exhaustive portraits of each, nor did the goals of the report necessarily require it.

Also included in the analysis, to a lesser extent, is work on dementia friendly communities through ACT on Alzheimer’s. These initiatives are not included in the profiles.

Not all efforts are discrete initiatives with a beginning and end. Many efforts aim to bring sustained change and so are considered ongoing, or are continuing to the point that the initiative is embedded in the community to the point that it can sunset its initial form. (Nevertheless, “initiative” is used broadly throughout the report for lack of a better term.)
APPENDIX 3

Interviewees

Interviews were conducted between August and November 2016, by phone. The 24 interviewees, listed below, included 12 city employees, three county employees, two school district employees, three non-profit employees and four volunteers, all of whom were older adults (three of four retired) with high-level skill sets and strong networks within their communities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Municipality or Organization</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sharmeen Al-Jaff</td>
<td>Senior Planner</td>
<td>City of Chanhassen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jennifer Anderson</td>
<td>Public Health Program Specialist, Office of Aging</td>
<td>Carver County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barry Bernstein</td>
<td>Director, Parks and Recreation</td>
<td>City of Apple Valley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katy Boone</td>
<td>Public Health Planner, Office of Aging</td>
<td>Carver County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julie Farnham</td>
<td>Senior Planner</td>
<td>City of Bloomington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roger Green</td>
<td>Chair, Woodbury THRIVES Leadership Team</td>
<td>Woodbury</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mary Hershberger-Thun</td>
<td>Board Member, WeCAB</td>
<td>Carver County and Mound/ Westonka Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tara Jebens-Singh</td>
<td>Adult Programs Coordinator, White Bear Area Senior Program</td>
<td>White Bear Lake Area Public Schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dan Johnson</td>
<td>President &amp; CEO</td>
<td>Catholic Eldercare</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jackie Johnstone</td>
<td>Director, Alternative and Community Education</td>
<td>Eastern Carver County Schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nan Just</td>
<td>Project Manager, ElderCare Development Partnership (former)</td>
<td>Metropolitan Area Agency of Aging</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kathleen Kelso</td>
<td>Chair, Advisory Committee on Aging</td>
<td>City of Saint Paul</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christina Kendrick</td>
<td>Senior Community Specialist, Department of Neighborhood and Community Relations</td>
<td>City of Minneapolis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tom Lawell</td>
<td>City Administrator</td>
<td>City of Apple Valley</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jess Luce</td>
<td>Supervisor, Communities for a Lifetime Initiative</td>
<td>Dakota County</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dianne Miller</td>
<td>Assistant City Administrator</td>
<td>City of Eagan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Susan Muelken</td>
<td>Recreation Manager, Parks and Recreation</td>
<td>City of Apple Valley</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bruce Nordquist</td>
<td>Community Development Director</td>
<td>City of Apple Valley</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cindy O’Donovan</td>
<td>Facilitator (pro bono)</td>
<td>Community Forum on Seniors, White Bear Lake Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kris Orluck</td>
<td>Senior Program Coordinator, Parks and Recreation</td>
<td>City of Maple Grove</td>
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<td>Lorinda Pearson</td>
<td>Manager, Human Services</td>
<td>City of Bloomington</td>
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<tr>
<td>Laura Smith</td>
<td>Wellness and Volunteer Coordinator</td>
<td>City of St Louis Park</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lucy Thompson</td>
<td>Principal Planner</td>
<td>City of Saint Paul</td>
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<tr>
<td>Courtney Whited</td>
<td>Director of Transportation</td>
<td>DARTS</td>
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Interview Questions

Interview questions were crafted to elicit the bones of each effort as well as flesh out the nuances and less obvious forces at work. The following is the general set of questions and discussion points provided to most interviewees as a starting point. When relevant, interviewees also were asked about how their efforts influenced or were tied to their community’s comprehensive plan update.

- Initiative origins and background; current status
- Framework being used (e.g., WHO Age-Friendly program, other, none)
- Structure and scope of initiative
- Timeline: time-limited or ongoing
- Funding and in-kind support
- Key leaders: Who is driving the effort (both paid and unpaid leaders)?
- Partners: roles of city, residents, nonprofits, businesses, et al.
- Success factors
- Accomplishments
- Challenges
- Have there been any pivotal moments, events, or circumstances that really influenced the work or helped move it forward?
- Has anything unexpected happened along the way that ended up advancing the work in a different way or at a new level?
- What has been the most gratifying or exciting development or aspect of the work?
APPENDIX 5

Existing Frameworks for Lifetime Communities Efforts

World Health Organization’s Age-Friendly Cities

WHO’s Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities is the leading program in helping communities become better places for people to age, with 380 member cities across the globe. AARP is the institutional affiliate for this program in the U.S. The AARP age-friendly network has more than 144 members.

The program is based on a policy framework called “active ageing.” It goes beyond physical aging to encompass continued participation in social, economic, cultural, spiritual and civic affairs. From that an age-friendly city is defined as one that “encourages active ageing by optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age. In practical terms, an age-friendly city adapts its structures and services to be accessible to and inclusive of older people with varying needs and capacities” (World Health Organization, 2007, Global Age-Friendly Cities: A Guide).

Cities that join the age-friendly network commit to a four-phase, five-year process that includes obtaining political commitment; doing an assessment of community needs; creating and implementing a three-year action plan; evaluating progress; and beginning again.

WHO identified the following eight domains—now widely used and referenced—as key areas to evaluate and improve when working toward age-friendliness.

1. **Outdoor Spaces and Buildings**: Availability of safe and accessible recreational facilities.

2. **Transportation**: Safe and affordable modes of public and private transportation.

3. **Housing**: A wide range of housing options for older residents; the ability to age in place; and other home modification programs.

4. **Social Participation**: Access to leisure and cultural activities; opportunities for older residents to participate in social and civic engagement with their peers and younger people.

5. **Respect and Social Inclusion**: Programs to promote ethnic and cultural diversity as well as multigenerational interaction and dialogue.

6. **Civic Participation and Employment**: The promotion of paid work and volunteer activities for older residents and opportunities to engage in formulation of policies relevant to their lives.

7. **Communication and Information**: The promotion of and access to technology to keep older residents connected to their community and friends and family.

8. **Community and Health Services**: Access to homecare services, clinics, and programs to promote wellness and active aging.
Elements of Communities for a Lifetime Strategy

“Fostering Communities for a Lifetime” is one of five themes that came out of Transform 2010, a collaborative effort led by the Minnesota Department of Human Services to prepare the state for the aging population. This theme was defined and outlined as follows:

**Definition:** Communities for a Lifetime are good places to grow up and grow old, and offer physical, social and service features for residents of all ages.

**Strategies**

1. Support assessment and planning efforts to develop healthy communities for a lifetime.

2. Transform physical infrastructures of communities, including housing, mobility options and accessible public space.

3. Foster social connections that build “community” among residents and nurture a sense of responsibility across generations.

4. Expand the range of products and services that help community residents stay independent and engaged as they age.

ACT on Alzheimer’s Community Engagement Process

This four-phased process was created as part of the ACT on Alzheimer’s initiative to create dementia friendly communities.

- **Action Phase 1:** Convene key community leaders and members to understand dementia and its implications for your community. Then, form an Action Team.

- **Action Phase 2:** Use questionnaires in the toolkit to assess current community strengths and gaps concerning dementia.

- **Action Phase 3:** Analyze the community assessment findings and determine action priorities for your community.

- **Action Phase 4:** Create a community action plan and take action community-wide to become dementia friendly.